HandsOn®
The Newsletter of the American Massage Therapy Association
September/October 2003

AMTA Celebrates 60 Years At Upcoming Convention

The massage therapy profession has changed a great deal over the past 60 years, since the American Massage Therapy Association was established, and it is this growth that we will celebrate at the 2003 National Convention in Richmond, Virginia, on October 22–26.

This year, at the Diamond Jubilee celebration, join your fellow colleagues as AMTA commemorates its 60-year anniversary. Attendees will be able to take a look at how the association has evolved over the years, and learn about the tremendous impact AMTA has had on the profession of massage therapy. The association will pay a special tribute to its history at this convention, as well as share AMTA's future directions (see article at right) .

Our past and future also will be brought to light through this year's educational offerings. Twenty diverse and innovative continuing education courses will be instructed by the foremost experts in massage education, including Bob King (IL), Linda Tellington-Jones, Benny Vaughn (TX) and keynote presenter Bernie Siegel. These instructors, along with many others, will teach courses in such topics as massage and cancer, tai chi massage, sports massage, ethics and business.

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Members Direct Future Of The Association

During the last 60 years—particularly the last decade—AMTA has accomplished much. Now, the future of AMTA is in your hands.

Hundreds of great suggestions poured in for the updated Strategic Plan, which will be released at the National Convention in October.

As AMTA prepares to commemorate its 60th anniversary, the National Board of Directors is ready to implement new processes that will enable AMTA to be more responsive to the changing environment of the massage therapy profession, and to be even better equipped to meet the needs of members.

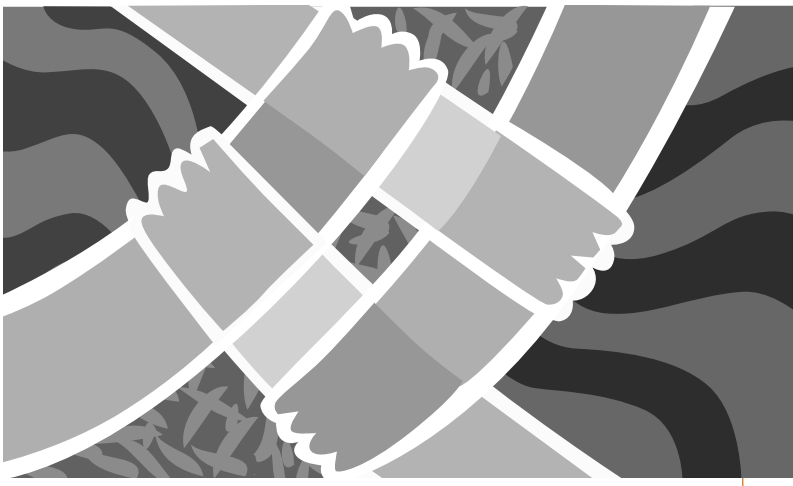
The board spent the past year analyzing the association's goals, processes and programs. It reflected on AMTA's history, where it feels the profession should go, how massage is currently viewed by the public, and how it wants the public to view massage. All of AMTA's stakeholders were acknowledged.

AMTA is defining its values as an association, and has decided to be more strategically prepared to serve the membership, adapt to changes within the massage therapy profession and make plans founded on knowledge-based decision-making.

The board has now developed and approved strategic principles to guide the review of products, programs and services, and will use strategic accountability to evaluate activities on an ongoing basis.

This definitely will be an involved process for all of us—a period of change being called *Future Directions for AMTA: Improving Today for Tomorrow*. As part of this process, the board:

- Wants members to provide ideas for member products, programs and services (contact Dean Vaeth at 847-864-0123, ext. 130). Members are encouraged to submit ideas.
- Will allocate funds so the budget will allow AMTA to support a manageable number of activities, and be fiscally effective and accountable.
- Will improve its communications.
- Will create a real partnership between volunteers and staff, allowing volunteers to focus on massage-related areas, and staff to focus on implementation and maintenance.



Hand in hand, members are shaping the course for the future of AMTA.

As the board makes decisions, it will let you know how the decisions will foster excellence and benefit members. If you have questions about AMTA's decision-making, or products, programs and services, ask a board member.

The board thanks you for your input.

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Membership in AMTA is open to all qualified individuals regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender, age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or physical handicap.

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President's Letter

Opportunity To Share

In late March, I had the pleasure of attending the New England Regional Conference (NERC) in Boxborough, Massachusetts. This was a milestone year, as the conference celebrated its 20th anniversary. Congratulations on a wonderful and successful event.

One of the highlights of the conference for me was seeing and chatting with Tom Fink (PA), a past AMTA president who served two terms. Tom shared memories and insights about the history of AMTA, along with some of his experiences as president. Also attending NERC to help celebrate the anniversary was Argell Miller (CO), a 30-year member of AMTA.

Two weeks later, it was my pleasure to attend the AMTA New York Chapter's 12th Convention. I enjoyed providing leadership training for the chapter board, and meeting members from New York and several surrounding states.

Tom Fink (left) and Argell Miller helped make Brenda Griffith's experience at the AMTA New England Regional Conference enjoyable.

Frequently, when I attend chapter events, members ask questions or share concerns with me regarding chapter matters that they have not shared with their chapter board members. I want to express that the volunteers on an AMTA chapter board are there to serve you, the member! They want—and need—to hear from you about your concerns, questions or ideas, so these areas can be addressed.

Give your chapter board a chance to serve you!

In service,

Brenda L. Griffith

Brenda L. Griffith
AMTA President

AMTA Sends Massage Poster To Medical Offices

A new poster about the benefits of massage is being distributed to medical group practices. The poster, produced by AMTA, is designed for physicians' exam rooms, and invites patients to discuss massage therapy with their doctors. The goals for the poster are:

- To get more people to think about how massage may benefit them;
- To encourage more physicians to discuss massage with their patients (and recommend it!);
- To tell both groups how to find an AMTA Professional Active member through *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service.

About half of AMTA members say they are interested in making better connections with the medical community. AMTA's annual consumer surveys show that consumers who discuss massage with their primary health-care providers usually get a favorable response. The poster is a new way for massage therapists, physicians and potential clients to learn more about each other. We expect it to generate more referrals to members.

In September, the poster is being mailed to more than 4,000 medical offices with a cover letter encouraging the medical group managers to post it in an exam room. The office managers will be invited to request more posters from AMTA.

The 11 x 17-inch posters will be distributed to a wide variety of health-care professionals and facilities over the next year. Home Depot will display the posters in the employee areas of its stores.

To see the poster in color and order some for yourself (see pricing below), log on to the Members' Only section of AMTA's Web site.

You Can Purchase These Posters Too!

You can buy the posters to distribute to medical offices in your area by placing a credit card order online using a special form in the Members' Only section of the Web site. The price is $8.75 for 10 posters, including first-class postage. While supplies last.

AMTA's External Relationships Rapidly Evolving

In the last year, AMTA opened many doors to establish massage therapy as part of wellness and health care, and to motivate consumers to get a massage. AMTA's efforts have now moved beyond merely promoting public awareness of the benefits of massage to promoting the demand for massage.

Here are some of the things AMTA is doing:

- To promote both the acceptance of massage and demand for it, we have targeted media efforts to national publications and broadcast media. AMTA's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week® (NMTAW™) and our annual consumer surveys are two tools your association is using to educate the public, employers, the health-care community, the media and legislators about how massage has become mainstream.
- This year, public relations and media relations focus on the benefits of massage for pain relief. AMTA has published an ad and an article in the professional magazine, *Practical Pain Management*. The theme for NMTAW 2003 is "Relieve Pain with Massage." AMTA just completed the first

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Chapter Volunteer Orientation A Success

In mid-July, 69 volunteers from 48 chapters attended AMTA's first Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program (CVOP) in Evanston, Illinois. The successful culmination was based entirely on chapter volunteers' suggestions, National Board's guidance and input from members, and many hours of volunteer and staff planning.

CVOP was born out of the board's approval in 2001 of a three-phase program to help AMTA's members receive a reliable chapter experience.

The three major program concepts—"Remember the Member," "Volunteers are Accountable" and "Building Community"—were based on members' ideas for curriculum and learning objectives.

"It was clear, from beginning to end, that all of the participants were extremely enthusiastic and ready to learn," says AMTA Executive Director Elizabeth Lucas, CAE. "This is the most successful AMTA volunteer training event to date."

During the four-day span, participants heard presentations from AMTA experts about the member experience, association basics, and legal and financial obligations; toured AMTA's National Office; and participated in facilitated discussions on chapter relations basics, volunteer development, financial discussion and board development.

"Having the opportunity to meet, become friends and learn with officers from all the chapters, national officers and staff has been a very powerful and positive experience, affording me better communication," says Jim Stern (CA), AMTA-California Chapter president.

Margi Cangany-Lane (IN), AMTA-Indiana Chapter treasurer, agreed that the training was valuable. "I didn't realize the quality and quantity of resources available to us at the national level. CVOP was a great help to me, my chapter and the members I represent," she says.

Legislative Report

That Was Then, This Is Now

Much has changed in the last 10 years with regard to massage therapy legislation. In the Fall 1993 issue of *Massage Therapy Journal*®, Jack Thomas (MD) wrote of the difficulties and expense of achieving state regulation. The article suggested that "massage therapists and other bodyworkers in the unregulated states had best prepare to preempt the almost certain opposition of the physical therapists by negating the arguments they will use." Among these arguments were:

1. **Then:** "Practitioners who receive only 500 hours of training shouldn't be regarded as health-care professionals because they are not trained sufficiently in the recognition of contraindications, and can't tell when to refer to another provider."
   Now: While 500 hours has been used as a minimum standard for entry level, the explosive growth of the profession has made education more available. This includes more specialized training and certification.
2. **Then:** "They should not be called therapists because that will be confusing to the public. Therapy has to do with the treatment of disease or disability."
   Now: Consumers have played a major role in the emergence and acceptance of the massage therapy and bodywork profession. About 53 percent of Americans say that massage therapists are providers of alternative or complementary health care.[1]
3. **Then:** "They do not fit the 'medical model.' They practice alternative procedures that are utilized by very few physicians. For example, they work with 'energy' and use crystals in their procedures."
   Now: Of the 14 percent of adults who spoke with their health-care providers about massage therapy, 30 percent were recommended by their physician, compared to 26 percent in 2001.[2]

While the relationship between physical therapists and massage therapists may have been adversarial in 1993, today it is less so. It is these relationships and the cultivation of mutually beneficial working partnerships with physical therapists, as well as chiropractors and other bodyworkers, that will be key for successful legislation in the 17 unregulated states.

1. AMTA *2002 Massage Therapy Consumer Survey Fact Sheet.*
2. AMTA *2002 Demand For Massage Therapy Fact Sheet.*

fingerprints

Massage In Appreciation Of Teachers

In early May, Tamara Morris (MD) volunteered four hours of chair massage at Oakleigh Elementary School, where Morris' 5-year-old son attends. "It was the least I could do in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week," she says. Morris comments that the teachers really needed a stress-relieving, relaxing massage. "All the teachers were thrilled to find out my child is just beginning his time at their school," she says.

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, Tamara Morris volunteered chair massages at her son's elementary school.

Ohio Therapist Receives Pain Management Award

This past March, Sharon Barnes (OH) was granted one of four statewide "2003 Excellence In Pain Management" awards from the Ohio Pain Initiative (OPI), an organization committed to ensuring that people in Ohio with pain receive optimum pain management. Barnes was a recipient of the award because of her devotion to the goal of promoting optimal pain management.

Barnes, the executive director and co-owner of SHI Integrative Medical Massage School in Lebanon, Ohio, says, "I feel honored to receive this award, which was being granted to a massage therapist for the first time. But I feel I am also receiving it for my students and all licensed massage therapists in Ohio who

are working daily in their private practices with individuals experiencing pain."

As part of the school's outreach program, Barnes and the massage students work at the VA Hospital in Cincinnati with veterans who are suffering from chronic pain. "Veterans have been the best teachers about chronic pain—the medical and psychological complexities associated with individuals suffering from pain, and the impact of a multidisciplinary approach with their pain management," Barnes says.

Sharon Barnes is the first massage therapist recipient of this Ohio Pain Initiative award.

Member Gives Back To Troops

Throughout the month of March, Ross Vondrak (IL) hosted a donation drive at his practice, Touch of Comfort Massage Therapy in Countryside, Illinois, for Operation: Support Our Troops.

Small personal items, nonperishable snacks and letters of thanks and encouragement were received from Vondrak's clients. With an additional 10 percent of his session fees in the months of March and April, Vondrak was able to purchase many other supplies, food items and comforts of home. "I was amazed that I was able to deliver nearly 2,000 items for shipment to our troops," he says.

In addition, Vondrak received support from local businesses: 75 dental hygiene kits were donated by Advancements in Dental Care in Brookfield, Illinois; and more than 1,000 Blistex® lip balms were donated by the manufacturer in Oak Brook, Illinois.

"Massage therapists are facilitators and activists for improved health—spiritual as well as physical and mental," he says. "Supporting the troops who give so unselfishly of themselves seems to be a very natural extension of our mission."

Ross Vondrak single-handedly organized a successful donation drive at his massage practice to support troops overseas.

quick tips!

Bulk Up Your Supplies And Equipment

Over the course of your massage practice, you will buy many office supplies, so it is worthwhile to identify one or more reliable sources of items you prefer to use. The office supply business is very competitive, and not all retailers are the same. You may find that many of the largest chains have

the most limited variety of items, and a smaller retailer that specializes in service may offer a much wider selection at about the same price. Buying in bulk can save you money in the long run, but be sure you have the space to store the supplies, and that nothing will expire before you use it.

A great place to meet vendors and try out massage supplies and products is in the Exhibits Marketplace at the AMTA National Convention. For the upcoming convention in October, more than 100 exhibitors will be available to answer questions and assist you in testing their supplies and products.

Adapted from The Business of Massage *textbook.*
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Be Your Best

Be the best massage therapist you can be by taking advantage of AMTA's new professional development center. The purpose of "Be Your Best" is to provide you with easy-to-use online access to knowledge and information that addresses your evolving needs for career growth and business development skills.

The underlying principle of "Be Your Best" is that no matter how much training and knowledge you have, there are always new questions and challenges that arise as your career progresses. AMTA developed this member benefit after years of learning just what massage therapists—both new and established—face in their day-to-day work.

You can visit the "Be Your Best" site to access the valuable information as often as you like. This method of training embraces three categories of learning lessons:

- Launching Your Career—explores options and opportunities for career growth;
- Managing Your Practice—covers keys steps for building and retaining successful client relationships;
- Connecting With Your Profession—shows you how to be an active massage therapy participant who contributes to the advancement of the profession.

Each month, AMTA will add new lessons to each of these categories. An online self-quiz will accompany each lesson. In the first year of "Be Your Best," there will be a total of 36 lessons and quizzes that cover a wide variety of topics and subjects. You also can read the "Idea of the Day" for great new tips to benefit your practice.

Links to the professional development center and the "Idea of the Day" can be found on your portal entry page. Simply log on to the Members' Only section.

"Be Your Best" is intended for the exclusive use of AMTA members.

Your Week To Proclaim Massage For Pain Relief

Don't forget: AMTA's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week® (NMTAW™) is October 19–25, and the theme is "Relieve Pain with Massage."

For the special Home Depot National Massage Therapy Awareness Week from October 5–11, please remember:

- Home Depot stores will hire AMTA Professional Active members through *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service for onsite massage of its employees.
- Home Depot will only use the locator service to book appointments for stores.
- To be eligible, you need to be a Professional Active member enrolled in the national locator service, with a listing that you do onsite or chair massage.

- Home Depot has asked members *not* to contact their stores directly.
- Home Depot is coordinating contact between individual members and Home Depot stores.
- Home Depot employees will be encouraged to use the national locator service to get massage on their own.

This is just one more way AMTA is creating demand for our members.

Board Invites Members' Feedback On Proposed COMTA Bylaw Change

While moving ahead with the theme set for the organization's period of change, *Future Directions for AMTA: Improving Today for Tomorrow*, your National Board of Directors approved two important bylaw changes at its May meeting.

First, the Commission on Nominations name has been changed to the Commission on Candidacy, which better reflects its purpose: to secure at least one candidate for each open National Officer and National Board of Directors position, and to ensure the eligibility of candidates.

Second, the board changed the way that the House of Delegates (HOD) works in relation to AMTA's mission and goals. The approved bylaw removes the authority of the HOD for ratifying AMTA's mission and goals, and places this responsibility in the hands of your elected representatives—the AMTA board members—to obtain members' feedback and set the direction for the association.

Since you, the member, play an active role in directing the future of AMTA, we would like to share several bylaw changes the board will be discussing at its October meeting in Richmond, Virginia: 1) in Article VI, National Officers, Section 3, A through F, changing the term of office for elected officers to begin on the first day of the fiscal year and end on the last (March 1 through February 28)—a change that would be consistent with the budget and strategic planning of the association; 2) the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA) has requested that Article XII. Section 4 be removed from AMTA's Bylaws, which will allow COMTA to pursue 501(c)(3) status.

More detailed information on the COMTA proposed bylaw change can be found in the Members' Only section on AMTA's Web site. We want to hear from you regarding this proposed COMTA change before the October board meeting. Comments should be sent to the attention of President Brenda L. Griffith via the E-mail reply on the Web site, or by mail to: AMTA National Office, 820 Davis St., Suite 100, Evanston, IL 60201.

Relationships

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member-conducted survey of clients on the results of massage for pain. News media are publishing an increasing number of articles about how people deal with pain, and how massage is routinely included as a viable therapy to reduce pain.

- We've broadened our contacts with corporations to promote massage in the workplace, and as part of corporate wellness plans. This year, Home Depot stores are mounting a unique effort to hire AMTA members for onsite massage of employees in all their stores. AMTA has worked with the wellness program of Federal Express (FedEx) to publish an article in its July wellness newsletter about the benefits of massage for pain relief. At press time, we're close to a commitment from FedEx to publish an article about massage for stress relief. AMTA is working with other major corporations to provide their employees with information about the benefits of massage for wellness, and how to use *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service.
- In the last few years, AMTA has seen an overwhelmingly positive response to massage from the health-care community. To protect massage therapists who already work in medical environments, as well as those who are interested in doing so, AMTA has been working closely with a growing number of medical organizations and government-appointed health-care panels. In May 2003, AMTA was asked to provide a massage therapy representative on the American Medical Association CPT® Editorial Panel, Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC). This gives AMTA an opportunity to provide input on coding issues that affect massage therapists who seek insurance reimbursement. Also in May, AMTA was invited to appoint an ongoing massage therapy liaison to attend all of the meetings of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on CAM Therapies. The association is delighted to announce that AMTA Foundation President John Balletto (RI) will be the AMTA liaison. In addition, AMTA sent Claude Gagnon (WI) to the June meeting of the IOM committee for a special presentation on regulatory issues and massage therapy.

These are major achievements for AMTA, and represent a new level of acceptance of massage therapy among medical professionals.

- Because of the rapidly growing interest in massage therapy among health-care providers, AMTA developed a new poster designed for use in physicians' exam rooms. (See article on Page 3.)

AMTA has been very successful in promoting massage among different audiences, and in representing the broad range of areas in which our members practice. In keeping with AMTA's Strategic Plan, the association will continue to promote massage therapy to all of these audiences and create demand for AMTA members.

foundation bulletin

Post-Convention Workshop Benefits AMTA Foundation

"Dirty Dozen: Myoskeletal Techniques for Neck, Shoulder and Hand Pain" will be presented by Erik Dalton (OK), Ph.D., at AMTA's 2003 National Convention Post-Convention Workshop in Richmond, Virginia, on October 26–27.

In this lively, hands-on workshop, Dalton will introduce new myoskeletal techniques for whiplash, thoracic outlet syndrome, tennis/golfer elbow and carpal tunnel pain. Beginning with the popular "Dirty Dozen" neck formula, and concluding with an innovative shoulder, arm and hand mobilization routine, attendees will leave this 12-hour training with new pain management tools.

Dalton brings a broad therapeutic background in massage, Rolfing® and osteopathy to his entertaining and informative pain management workshops.

Proceeds from the workshop will go to the AMTA Foundation.

Erik Dalton

AMTA Foundation Grantee Receives Funding From NIH

In 1996, the AMTA Foundation awarded a $10,000 research grant to Cynthia D. Myers (CA), Ph.D., and Michael Robinson, Ph.D., at the University of Florida for their study, titled "Sickle Cell Pain: Alternative Approaches to Pain Control." The foundation has received word that the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) will continue to fund Myers' work for two more years.

"It is very exciting to see that a pilot research project that had a portion of its original funding from a grant by the AMTA Foundation has been chosen for further funding by the largest granting agency in complementary, alternative and integrative medicine," says AMTA Foundation President John Balletto (RI). "We congratulate Cynthia on her accomplishment."

TAKE ACTION!

To see other research projects that were funded by the foundation, visit its Web site at: www.amtafoundation.org.

Credit Card Scanner Can Increase Your Revenue

The use of credit cards is growing at a steady rate. You could increase your revenue by offering clients a credit card payment option. It may be a factor in what makes a client decide to use your services.

When you upgrade to Professional Active membership, you have the option of purchasing a no-annual-fee credit card scanner from Nova Information Systems. For more information about purchasing a credit card scanner, call Nova at 800-546-1831 (press 2), or visit its Web site at: www.novainfo.com.

Calendar

2003

October 5-11
Special AMTA/Home Depot National Massage Therapy Awareness Week
Contact: 847-864-0123, ext. 149

October 19-21
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Richmond, Virginia
Contact: 847-864-0123, ext. 157

October 19-25
AMTA's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week®
Contact: 847-864-0123, ext. 149

October 22-26
AMTA 2003 National Convention
Richmond, Virginia
Registration: 847-864-0123, ext. 143
Exhibitors: 847-864-0123, ext. 113

2004

January 20-24
AMTA COS Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana
Contact: 847-864-0123, ext. 143

AMTA Celebrates 60 Years

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In addition, you'll be able to browse the Exhibits Marketplace, a trade show of more than 100 vendors. Here, you'll discover new products and services to enhance your practice. In the Exhibits Marketplace this year, AMTA will be raffling off several faux and real diamond prizes, including a pair of genuine diamond stud earrings. Attendees must be present to win. There will be 20 chances to win each day of the convention.

The registration fee is $400, which can be mailed, faxed, phoned in or submitted online to AMTA by September 29. If you are unavailable to attend the entire convention, consider registering for some individual sessions.

There are four easy ways to register: online at www.amtamassage.org; fax 847-864-1178; call 847-864-0123, ext. 143; or mail to the AMTA National Office, 820 Davis St., Suite 100, Evanston, IL 60201.

If you don't already have a registration form, call Gail Friedman at the National Office at 847-864-0123, ext. 143. She will be more than happy to send you a registration packet.

6 Things To Do During Your Stay In Richmond

1. Stroll down **Monument Avenue**.
2. Explore Civil War history at **Richmond National Battlefield Park** and the **Museum of the Confederacy**.
3. Journey down Route 5, and explore **plantation homes**.
4. Drive one hour to historic **Colonial Williamsburg**.
5. Go **white-water rafting** down the James River.
6. Spend an afternoon shopping at **Shockoe Slip**.

The Richmond skyline acts as a backdrop to the historic James River.

COMTA Correction

Accreditation of the Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy was also renewed at the April meeting of the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation. This school was inadvertently omitted from the article on Page 3 of the July/August 2003 issue.

Upcoming Deadlines

Oct. 15, 2003 — *Jan./Feb. 2004 Issue*
Jan. 2, 2004 — *March/April 2004 Issue*

Hands On welcomes contributions from all AMTA members. All submissions must include a legible signature and phone number, and may be edited for space and clarification. *Hands On* does not accept advertisements. Address all correspondence to:

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